
DE News

June 8, 2001 - Iowa Department of Education - Ted Stilwill, Director

From the Director's desk:

- *ICN meetings aid understanding of new teacher compensation*
- *Web site updates now online*

We've nearly completed our first round of ICN meetings (our eighth and final session is next week), and believe they've helped a great deal in making sure districts better understand the new teacher compensation policies and how they will benefit educators. Perhaps most helpful to us was hearing the comments participants had about the various elements of the new policies. Knowing your concerns and questions will help us target our messages so they address key issues of interest.

Remember to visit our Web site

Our Web site has been updated with a Teacher Compensation link on the lefthand menu bar: <http://www.state.ia.us/educate/>. Please visit periodically throughout the summer to get updated information, schedules, application forms and guidelines, and frequently asked questions. Items currently available include a policy summary, the ICN powerpoint presentation, updated allocation estimates, and text of the legislation.

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Ambassador for Education

Iowa's new Ambassador for Education is currently in the process of scheduling visitations for the 2001-2002 school year. The Iowa Teacher of the Year is granted a one-year leave of absence from the classroom to serve as Iowa's Ambassador for Education. This position was provided for by the Iowa Legislature in 1990. The Ambassador for Education will be:

- visiting Iowa schools;
- providing an additional line of communication between Iowa's teachers and the Department of Education;
- identifying and sharing exemplary programs and practices;
- providing input for future planning for instructional programs and for teacher preparation; and
- assisting with staff development.

Past Ambassadors for Education have visited many school districts across the state and we anticipate that many districts will again want to be included on this year's visitation schedule.

The 2001-2002 Ambassadors for Education is Gail Wortmann, the 2001 Iowa Teacher of the Year. Please peruse Gail's Web site for additional information and to schedule visits. Her site is <http://www.state.ia.us/educate/programs/toy/index.htm>



Far left: Iowa's 2001 Teacher of the Year Gail Wortmann with Secretary of Education Paige and President Bush.

Near left: Iowa's 2000 Teacher of the Year, Tom Paulsen, meets with students.

Vilsack urges community college consideration

Governor Vilsack released a statement this week urging lawmakers to consider at their special session new funding choices for community colleges. Vilsack wants legislators to provide the option for locally elected community college boards to raise funds to meet their obligations. The approved budget for fiscal year 2002 significantly reduces funding to the state's 15 community colleges. As a result, those schools may be forced to reduce or eliminate programs and raise tuition. Rather than let that happen, Vilsack is recommending that locally elected boards be allowed to raise local revenue to fill the funding gap.

Inclusive Schools rules delayed

The State Board's recommended update for Inclusive Schools rules has been delayed while the DE staff and Board members review and revise some of the new language. Several groups have expressed confusion about the language, specifically the inclusion of sexual orientation in several definitions. At its June meeting, State Board members voted to revise the proposed rules, and emphasized their continued commitment toward inclusive schools that are supportive of all students, regardless of their background.

In the News

Recent items of interest:

The U.S. Dept. of Education **Condition of Education 2001** was released this week. The report is a compilation of statistical information around 59 indicators. Information is organized in six areas: enrollment trends and student characteristics at all levels of education; student achievement and the enduring effects of education; student effort and rates of progress through the education system among different population groups; the quality of elementary and secondary education in terms of courses taken, teacher characteristics, and other factors; the context of postsecondary education; and societal support for learning, including parents and community support for learning, and public and

private financial support of education at all levels. You can find the report at ed.gov.pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2001072.

The **Education Research Service** issued a study this spring citing 10 societal trends that will have a significant impact on schools. The trends include an aging population, greater diversity, a move away from standardization toward personalization, technological advances, heightened efforts to recruit and retain employees. For more information, call 703/243-2100 or see ers.org.

The **Technology Counts 2001** report was recently published in Education Week, and included a state-by-state account of technology use in schools. Iowa's summary says 95% of our public schools have Internet access (compared to about 94% nationally), and 73% of teachers use the Internet for instruction (63% nationally). Iowa also is one of 26 states that have technology requirements that teachers must meet prior to initial licensure. About 13% of our teachers are considered beginners when it comes to using technology, compared to 28% nationally. Other results (with national numbers in parenthesis):

- Students per computer 3.8 (4.9)
- Students per Internet-connected computer 5.6 (7.9)
- 4th graders using computers for schoolwork 34% (29%)
- Half of teachers use computers at school 91% (76%)
- Schools with teacher email 94% (77%)

For more information, go to edweek.org.